IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please AMEND claims 1 and 13 in accordance with the following:

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A liquid-development electrophotographic apparatus in which a toner image formed by developing a formed electrostatic latent image by use of a nonvolatile liquid developer is transferred from an image-bearing member onto a printing medium ~~by a melt transfer process~~, the apparatus comprising:

control means for controlling a viscoelasticity of a toner image on the image-bearing member by bonding toner particles of the toner image together by means of partially melting the toner particles, so as to cause the liquid toner to enter a softened condition having a carrier agent in inter-bonded-toner-particle spacing, the control means causing the bonded toner particles to be separated from the carrier agent without causing the toner particles to be melted to such an extent as to be liquefied, wherein the viscoelasticity of the toner image is controlled such that, when a dynamic viscoelasticity of the toner image is measured at a forced vibration frequency of 1 Hz and an amplitude stress of 10 Pa, a storage modulus is within a range of 1.0E5 Pa to 1.0E8 Pa, and a loss modulus is within a range of 1.0E5 Pa to 1.0E8 Pa; and

carrier-agent-removing means for removing the carrier agent from the viscoelasticity-controlled toner image, the carrier-agent-removing means having a surface in contact at a contact region with the carrier agent that floats due to an electric field force, and removing the carrier agent by moving the surface in a direction opposite a moving direction of the toner image at the contact region~~.~~;

wherein the toner image is transferred onto the printing medium while the controlled dynamic viscoelasticity of the toner image is maintained.

2. (CANCELLED).

3. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The liquid-development electrophotographic apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

heating means for heating the toner image formed on the image-bearing member,wherein the

viscoelasticity of the toner image is controlled in such a manner that the heating means heats the toner image to a temperature at which the toner image has a target dynamic viscoelastic value, which is determined based on a previously measured relationship between a heating temperature and the dynamic viscoelasticity value of toner particles contained in the liquid developer to be used.

4. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The liquid-development electrophotographic apparatus according to claim 3, wherein, when the toner image is heated, a temperature of the image-bearing member is controlled to be lower than a boiling temperature of the carrier agent.

5. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The liquid-development electrophotographic apparatus according to claim 1, wherein:

the carrier-agent-removing means is provided on the image-bearing member at a position located immediately before a position of transfer onto the printing medium;

a bias voltage is applied to the carrier-agent-removing means to thereby move charged toner particles of the toner image present on the image-bearing body and softened by the viscoelasticity control means toward the image-bearing body, to thereby cause the carrier agent to float on the charged toner particles; and

the floating carrier agent is removed.

6. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The liquid-development electrophotographic apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the carrier-agent-removing means removes the carrier agent in such a manner that, when the toner image is to be transferred onto the printing medium, a solid content of the toner image is between about 50% and 95%.

7. (CANCELLED).

8. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The liquid-development electrophotographic apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

a plurality of removing means for removing the carrier agent each time a toner image in each of a plurality of colors for color printing is transferred onto the image-bearing member, wherein the removing means rotate in a same direction as a moving direction of the toner images on the image-bearing member.

9. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The liquid-development electrophotographic apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

printing-medium-heating means for preheating the printing medium to a temperature equal to or higher than a temperature of the image-bearing member before transferring the toner image onto the printing medium.

10. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The liquid-development electrophotographic apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

power supply means for applying a bias voltage in such a manner that an electric field force acts on the toner image to cause the toner image to move toward the printing medium during a transfer of the toner image onto the printing medium.

11. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The liquid-development electrophotographic apparatus according to claim 10, wherein:

the power supply means applies the bias voltage between the image-bearing member and a backup roller; and

the resistance of the image-bearing member is set to be between about 1.0E7 Ωcm and 1.0E10 Ωcm.

12. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The liquid-development electrophotographic apparatus according to claim 1, wherein a rubber material is used to form an outermost surface of the image-bearing member from which the toner image is transferred onto the printing medium.

13. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A liquid-development electrophotographic apparatus in which a toner image formed by a nonvolatile liquid developer adhering to an electrostatic latent image on an image-bearing drum is transferred onto a printing medium ~~by a melt transfer process~~, the apparatus comprising:

a viscoelasticity controller to control a viscoelasticity of the toner image, so that a storage modulus is within a range of 1.0E5 Pa to 1.0E8 Pa, and a loss modulus is within a range of 1.0E5 Pa to 1.0E8 Pa when measured using a forced vibration frequency of 1 Hz and an amplitude stress of 10 Pa; and

a carrier-agent-removing roller to remove a carrier agent from the viscoelasticity-controlled toner image, the carrier-agent-removing roller rotating in a same direction as the

image-bearing drum so that at a contact point a surface of the carrier-agent-removing roller moves in a direction opposite to a moving direction of a surface of the image-bearing drum wherein the toner image is transferred onto the printing medium while the controlled dynamic viscoelasticity of the toner image is maintained.